



REIGN OF THE SUPERMEN!



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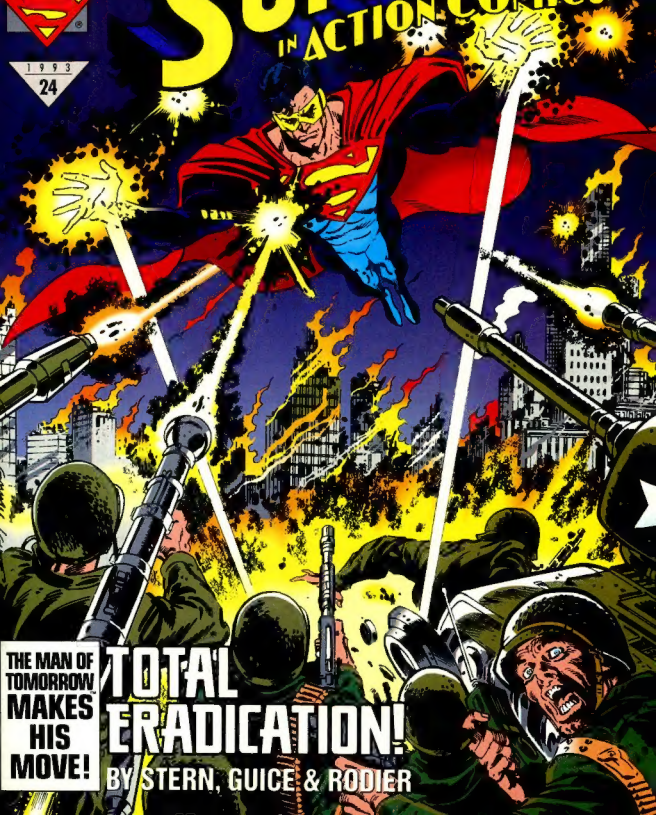


1993

24

SUPERMAN

IN ACTION COMICS



THE MAN OF
TOMORROW
MAKES
HIS
MOVE!

TOTAL ERADICATION!

BY STERN, GUICE & RODIER

LIES & REVELATIONS

CENTENNIAL PARK.
METROPOLIS...

LOOK NOT
UPON OUR SAVIOR'S
FACE WITH FEAR! FOR
THOUGH HE BEARS THE
MARKS OF HIS RIGHTEOUS
BATTLE AGAINST THE
TERRIBLE BEAST
DOOMSDAY--

-- BY HIS
DEEDS YOU
SHALL KNOW
THE TRUTH! AND
HIS NOBLE AND
MERCIFUL DEEDS RE-
VEAL IN HIM THE ONE
TRUE SUPERMAN!

BE NOT DECEIVED
BY THE SMOOTH, UN-
BLEMISHED FACE OF
THIS VISORED IMPOST!
HE MAY LOOK LIKE OUR
SAVIOR-- BUT, I SAY
UNTO YOU, HE IS A
FRAUD...



WRITTEN BY
**ROGER
STERN**

ILLUSTRATED BY
**JACKSON GUICE
& DENIS RODIER**

LETTERED BY
**BILL
OAKLEY**

COLORS BY
**GLENN
WHITMORE**

EDITED BY
**MIKE
CARLIN**

ABETTED BY NEW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
FRANK PITTARESE

SUPERMAN Created by **JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER**

... HE HAS WANTONLY
KILLED AND RUTHLESSLY
TORTURED! BUT BECAUSE
HE ATTACKED THE CRIMINAL
ELEMENT, TOO MANY OF US
LOOKED THE OTHER WAY!
SOME OF US WERE FOOLED,
TAKEN IN BY THIS
FALSE SUPERMAN...

... BUT NOW THE BEAST
HAS SHOWN HIS TRUE
COLORS! IN MY HOME STATE
OF CALIFORNIA, HE HAS
ATTACKED OUR CYBORG
SAVIOR AND LEVELED
COAST CITY!

HE MUST BE
SHUNNED! HE MUST
BE DRIVEN BACK TO THE
HELL WHENCE HE
CAME! HE MUST BE
DESTROYED!

IT DOESN'T
LOOK GOOD
STAND BY AND
WAIT FOR MY
COMMAND TO
MOVE OUT.

GEEZ, MAGGIE,
NEARLY HALF OF
THESE "SUPER-CULTIST"
WEIRDIES HAVE THEIR
FACES PAINTED TO
LOOK LIKE THE
CYBORG...

... AND THEY'RE
EATIN' UP THAT
PREACHER-MAN'S
FIRE - AN'-
BRIMSTONE!

DESTROY THE VISORED ONE!
DESTROY HIM!

FOOLS...

... YOUR "SAVIOR"
IS LESS THAN A
MAN... LESS EVEN
THAN A MACHINE!
YOU WORSHIP A
GRAVEN IMAGE
COME TO AN
UNHOLY LIFE!

YEAH, WHY DON'T
YOU WORSHIP A
GOLDEN CALF AN'
MAKE A CLEAN
JOB OF IT?

YOU...
DARE...
MOCK
OUR
LORD?!

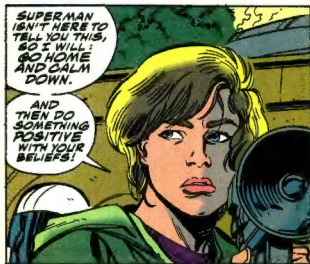
TO MY SIDE, TRUE
BELIEVERS! DRIVE
OUT THE DEVIL-
WORSHIPERS!

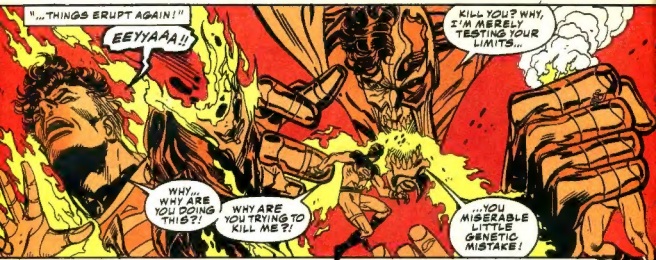
HE
HAS
RIS

THE POT'S
BOILING
OVER! DO
IT--NOW!!

THERE CAN BE
ONLY ONE ANSWER TO
SUCH BLASPHEMY!

IT IS YOU
WHO HAVE LOST
YOUR SOULS TO
THE DEVIL! WE
SHALL BE HEARD!
WE SHALL NOT
BE MOVED!





"...THINGS ERUPT AGAIN!"

EYYAAA!!

KILL YOU? WHY,
I'M MERELY
TESTING YOUR
LIMITS...

WHY...
WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS?!

WHY ARE
YOU TRYING TO
KILL ME?!

...YOU
MISERABLE
LITTLE
GENETIC
MISTAKE!



OOOOHH, MAN...
WHAT A WEIRD...

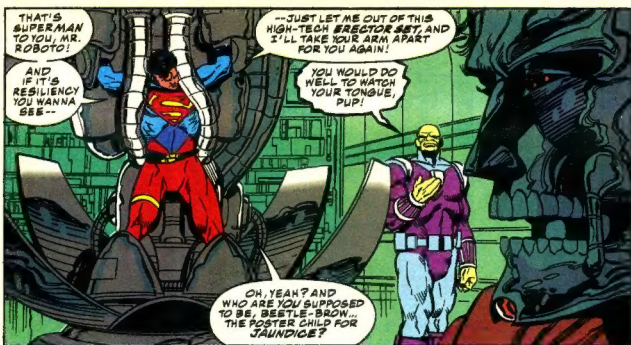
...DREAM?

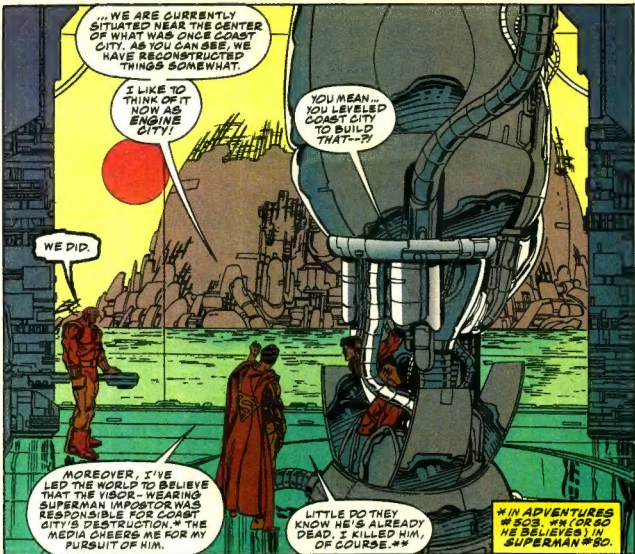
WHERE
THE HELL
AM I?!

OH, I
SUSPECTED
YOU MIGHT SOON
AWAKE.

NO! IT DID
HAPPEN! SORT
OF. THAT
CYBORG-SUPER-
MAN REALLY
TRIED TO ACE
ME!

YOU
DISPLAYED
A MOST
IMPRESSIVE
RESILIENCY
DURING OUR
LITTLE BATTLE,
SUPERBOY!

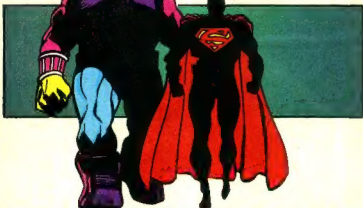




MY CONGRATULATIONS. YOU PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE MOST MASTERFULLY.

I MERELY POINTED OUT THE FACTS OF HIS PREDICAMENT. HIS FATE IS IN HIS HANDS.

WHAT OF THE OTHER SUPER-BEINGS WHO RESIDE ON THE WORLD? WHAT OF THE SELF-STYLED 'JUSTICE LEAGUE'?



THE LEAGUE AND THEIR ASSOCIATES COULD CONCEIVABLY PRESENT A CHALLENGE, WERE THEY TO LEARN THE TRUTH. BUT DESPITE THEIR CONSIDERABLE POWER, THEY SHOULD BE EASY TO DECEIVE!

ALL OF THEM? WHAT OF THE ONE CALLED SUPERGIRL?

SUPERGIRL?

DID YOU SAY SUPERGIRL?

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

YOU MUST BE JOKING, MONGUL! SHE'S HELD IN CHECK BY A CORPORATE SPONSOR! SHE'S EVEN LESS OF A THREAT THAN THE BOY!

YES... AND, OF COURSE, YOU WERE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE BOY EASILY. EXACTLY WHY DID YOU LET HIM LIVE? YOU SHOWED NO SUCH CONSIDERATION FOR THE VISORED PRETENDER.

WHY? THE BOY HAS POSSIBILITIES. HE HAS THE MALLEABILITY OF YOUTH. DATA FROM THE GOVERNMENT COMPUTER NETWORKS INDICATES THAT HE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE A SUPERMAN CLONE.

IF THIS IS SO, HE COULD PROVE USEFUL... AS SPARE PARTS, IF NOTHING ELSE.

AND IN RETROSPECT, I REGRET ALLOWING THE ATOMIZATION OF THAT OTHER "SUPERMAN." I WAS UNABLE TO LEARN HIS ORIGINS. IF I HAD...



"... WHO KNOWS WHAT WE MIGHT HAVE LEARNED FROM HIM?"



ALERT! FORTRESS WALLS ARE BEING BREACHED

SCAN INDICATES AN UNUSUALLY HIGH ENERGY RELEASE...





THE POWER SOURCE...
IS GONE! GONE! WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE WITH IT?

MASTER, PLEASE. WE HAVE
BUT FOLLOWED OUR
PRESCRIBED PROGRAMMING--!

YOU SHOULD NOT WASTE
YOUR ENERGY IN THIS
MANNER. YOU ARE
NOT WELL.

TELL ME... WHAT
HAPPENED HERE?!
WHERE HAS... THE
POWER GONE?!



THAT WALL... SHATTERED. KRYPTONIAN
CLOTHING SCATTERED... THE WAR-SUIT...
GONE! DID INTRUDERS BREAK IN...
STEAL THE POWER--?

NO, MASTER. THE
MATRIX OPENED
FROM WITHIN--

"--IT COULD NO LONGER
CONTAIN THE POWER YOU
HAD PLACED INSIDE."

THE KRYPTONIAN WAR-
SUIT WAS DESIGNED
TO WITHSTAND MULTI-
KILOTON EXPLOSIONS.
THERE ARE FEW THINGS
ON EARTH THAT
COULD STOP IT.

NOT THE ULTRA-
THICK WALLS OF
SUPERMAN'S
UNDERGROUND
ANTARCTIC
FORTRESS... NOT
THE UNCLARING
GOLD OF THE RONNE
ICE SHELF...

ALL CHALLENGES ARE
DEALT WITH AUTOMATI-
CALLY, EFFICIENTLY
AND HUMANELY...

"...NOT THE INCREDIBLE PRESSURES OF
THE OCEAN FLOOR. NOTHING PRESENTS
ANY CREDIBLE OBSTACLE TO THE WAR-
SUIT AS IT MARCHES ON.

"...AND THEN, IT CON-
TINUES ON-- EVER
NORTHWARD--TOWARDS
ITS PREPROGRAMMED
DESTINATION.

METROPOLIS.

INSPECTOR SAWYER? I NEED TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT THE REPORTS FROM COAST CITY.

COAST--?! MS. LANE, I HARDLY THINK THAT MY PROMOTION TO INSPECTOR EXTENDED MY AUTHORITY ACROSS COUNTRY!

I KNOW, BUT YOU'RE WORKING WITH COMMISSIONER HENDERSON ON THE INVESTIGATIONS OF THE FOUR NEW "SUPERMEN"--- AND THAT'S REALLY WHAT THIS CONCERNS. IN THE TELEVISED REPORTS FROM CALIFORNIA--

--WHEN THAT CYBORG-SUPERMAN PRAISED THE TEEN SUPERMAN, HE SAID, "I WISH I'D HAD THAT MUCH CONFIDENCE IN MY POWERS WHEN I WAS HIS AGE."*

SO?

THE REAL SUPERMAN ONCE TOLD ME THAT HIS POWERS DEVELOPED SLOWLY. WHEN HE WAS IN HIS MID-TEENS, HE DIDN'T HAVE THE LEVEL OF POWER THIS TEEN SUPERMAN HAS!

*AGAIN, IN ADVENTURES #503.

LOOK, MAYBE HE WAS SPEAKING METAPHORICALLY. THE FEDS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN HIM, AND THEY SEEM TO HAVE GOOD REASON TO--!

AH, INSPECTOR, THERE YOU ARE! GOT A SEC?

SURE. OH, LANE, THIS IS TOM JENSEN, ONE OF OUR POLICE SCIENTISTS. HE'S ON THE TEAM INVESTIGATING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SUPERMAN'S BODY FROM ITS TOMB.

TOM, LOIS LANE OF THE DAILY PLANET.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

INSPECTOR, I DISCOVERED SOMETHING THAT I KNEW YOU'D WANT TO HEAR ABOUT RIGHT AWAY... SOMETHING WEIRD ABOUT THE STONE SLAB THAT THE COFFIN HAD BEEN RESTING ON...

...IT'S SHORTER THAN IT ORIGINALLY HAD BEEN! I DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHY, BUT APPARENTLY SOMETHING WAS STOLEN PART OF ITS MASS!

WHAT?!?

"YOU MAY FIND THIS SHOCKING..."

A large panel showing Superman flying over a city in ruins. Debris is scattered everywhere, and smoke rises from the ground. The background shows damaged skyscrapers.

... I KNOW THAT
WE DID. I APOLOGIZE
FOR THE PICTURE
QUALITY...

... THIS RECORDING
COMES FROM A CAM-
CORDER WHICH WE
RECOVERED FROM THE
RUBBLE OF COAST CITY.
IT IS A MIRACLE THAT
IT SURVIVED AT ALL.

IF ONLY I COULD
HAVE ARRIVED IN
TIME TO PREVENT MY
IMPOSTOR'S SENSE-
LESS SLAUGHTER.
THOSE GALLANT
NATIONAL GUARDS-
MEN FOUGHT TO THE
VERY END.

I WON'T
TROUBLE YOU
WITH ANY MORE OF
THIS. IT'S... NOT
PLEASANT.

A panel showing a wide, aerial view of a city that has been almost completely destroyed. A large, dark, irregular crater is visible in the center of the landscape.

THIS IS THE
PRESENT STATE
OF COAST CITY, AS
RECORDED BY THE
CBS CAMERA CREW
WHO HAVE ACCOM-
PANIED US.

DUE TO THE
MAGNITUDE OF THE
DESTRUCTION, THEY
HAVE REFRAINED FROM
RELEASING THIS
FOOTAGE FOR GENERAL
BROADCAST UNTIL
AUTHORITIES CAN
PREPARE THE
PUBLIC.

I'M SURE YOU'LL
AGREE THAT
THOSE WHO WERE
RESPONSIBLE FOR
THIS HORRIBLE
CATASTROPHE MUST
BE DEALT WITH...

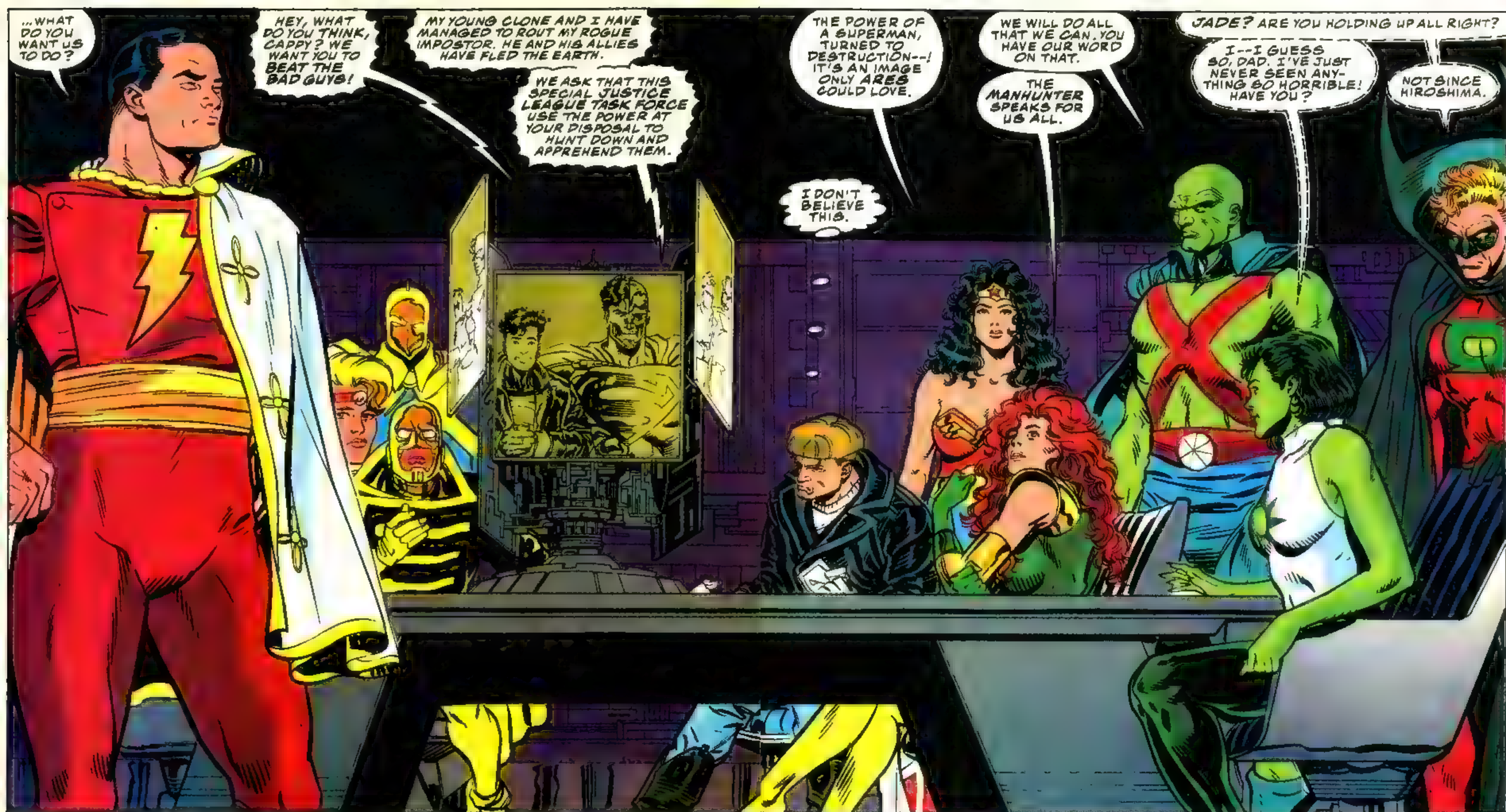
A panel featuring Clark Kent in the foreground, looking towards the right. Behind him, Superman is shown from the chest up, with a metallic, mask-like face.

... OVER SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE WERE
KILLED HERE. THEY MUST BE AVENGED!

SUPERMAN'S
RIGHT! BUT WE'RE
GONNA NEED YOUR
HELP! WE'RE
HOPPIN' TO KEEP
ON TOP OF
THINGS HERE.

INDEED. THERE ARE
FIRESTORMS TO BE
EXTINGUISHED AND
FAULT-LINES TO BE
SHORED UP.

YOU
HAVE OUR
FULL SUPPORT,
SUPERMAN...



...WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO?

HEY, WHAT DO YOU THINK, CAPPY? WE WANT YOU TO BEAT THE BAD GUYS!

MY YOUNG CLONE AND I HAVE MANAGED TO ROUT MY ROGUE IMPOSTOR. HE AND HIS ALLIES HAVE FLED THE EARTH.

WE ASK THAT THIS SPECIAL JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE USE THE POWER AT YOUR DISPOSAL TO HUNT DOWN AND APPREHEND THEM.

THE POWER OF A SUPERMAN, TURNED TO DESTRUCTION--! IT'S AN IMAGE ONLY ARES COULD LOVE.

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS.

WE WILL DO ALL THAT WE CAN. YOU HAVE OUR WORD ON THAT.

THE MANHUNTER SPEAKS FOR US ALL.

JADE? ARE YOU HOLDING UP ALL RIGHT?

I--I GUESS SO, DAD. I'VE JUST NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO HORRIBLE! HAVE YOU?

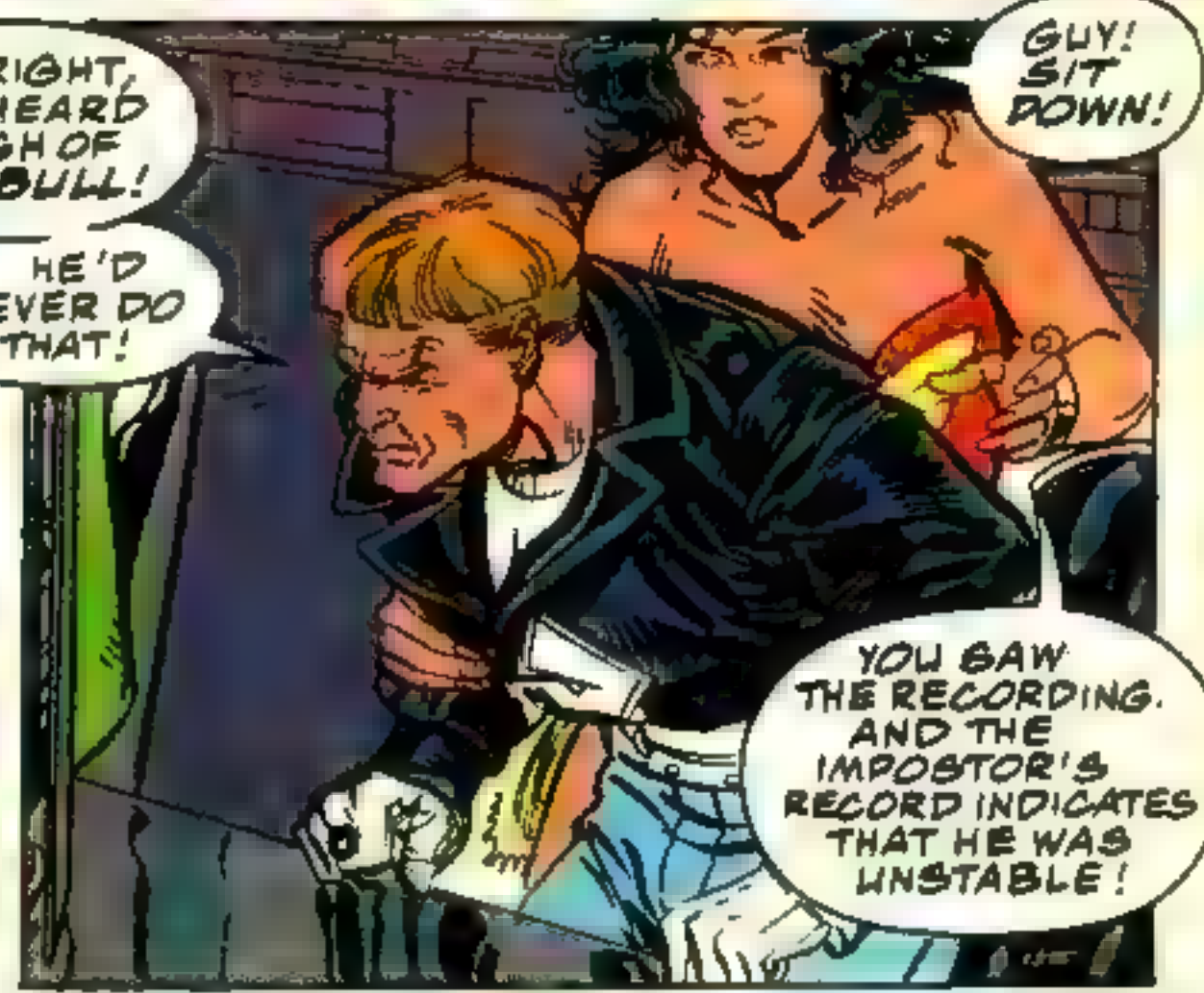
NOT SINCE HIROSHIMA.



MY PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS INDICATE THAT THE FALSE SUPERMAN WAS THE POINT MAN FOR AN ALIEN ARMADA BENTON REMAKING THIS ENTIRE PLANET.

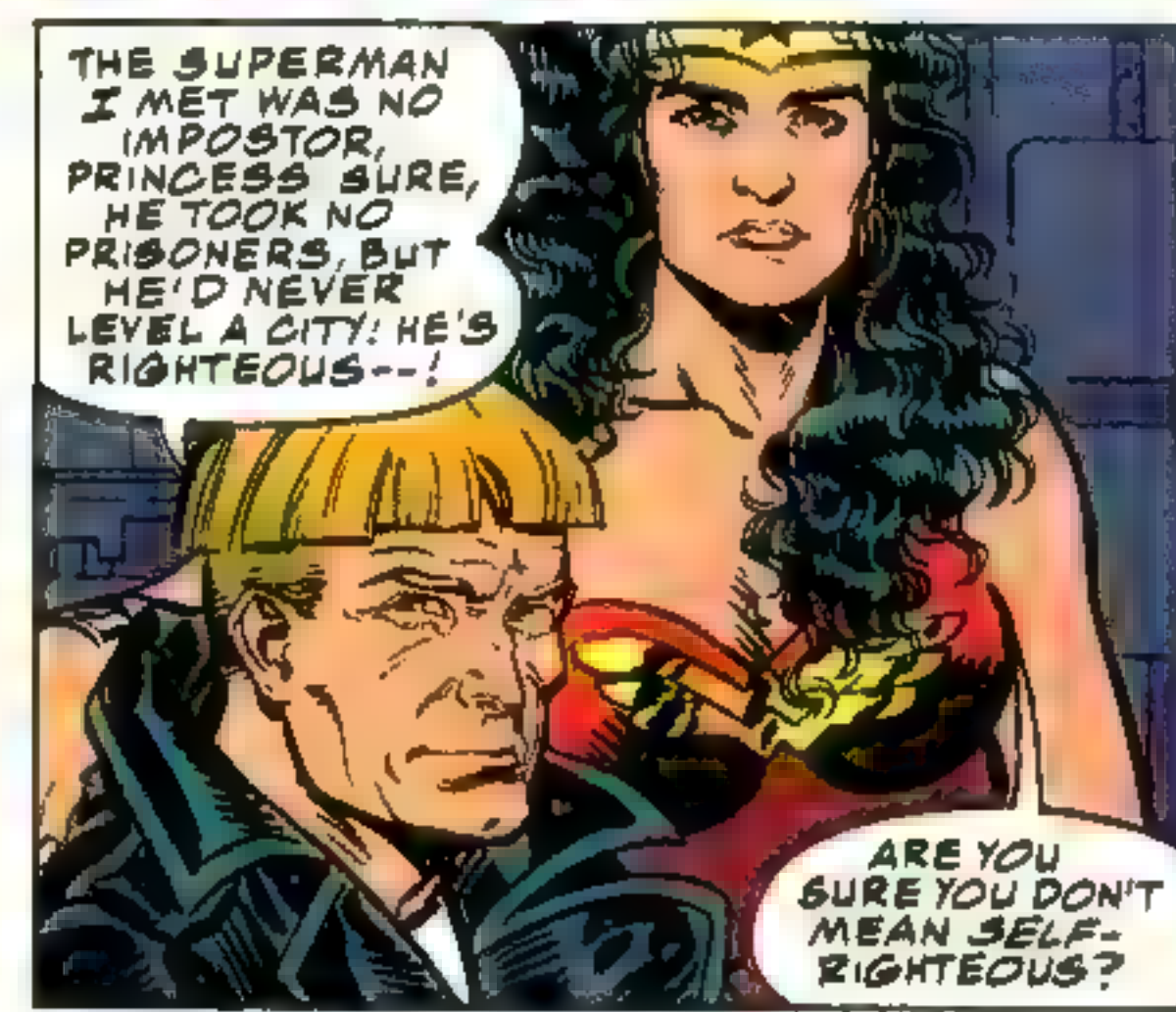
ALL RIGHT, I'VE HEARD ENOUGH OF THIS BULL!

HE'D NEVER DO THAT!



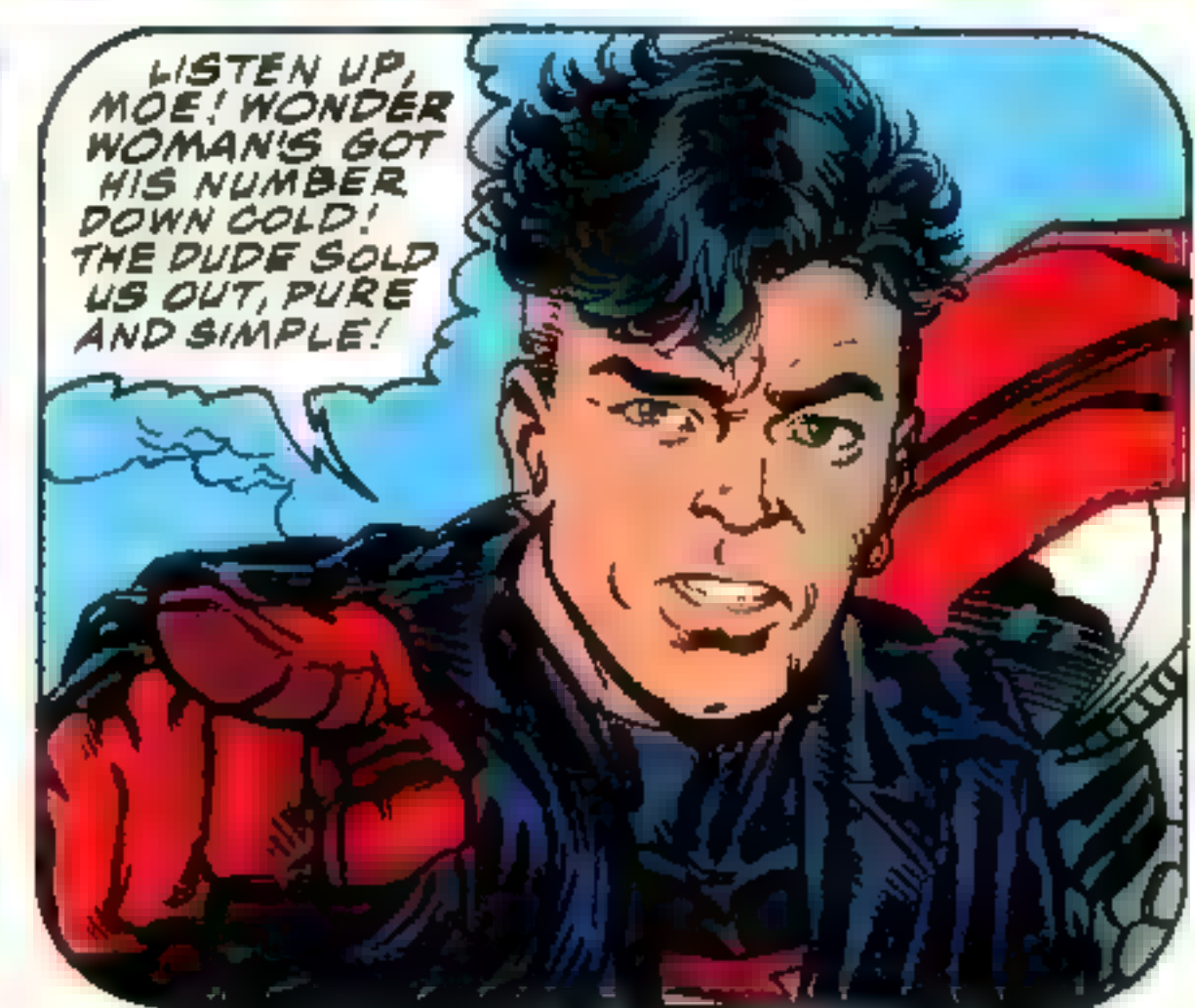
GUY! SIT DOWN!

YOU SAW THE RECORDING. AND THE IMPOSTOR'S RECORD INDICATES THAT HE WAS UNSTABLE!



THE SUPERMAN I MET WAS NO IMPOSTOR, PRINCESS SURE, HE TOOK NO PRISONERS, BUT HE'D NEVER LEVEL A CITY: HE'S RIGHTEOUS--!

ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T MEAN SELF-RIGHTEOUS?

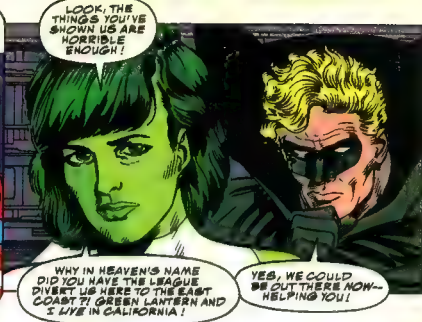


LISTEN UP, MOE! WONDER WOMAN'S GOT HIS NUMBER DOWN COLD! THE DUDE SOLD US OUT, PURE AND SIMPLE!



IF YOU COULD SEE WHAT WE'VE SEEN--!

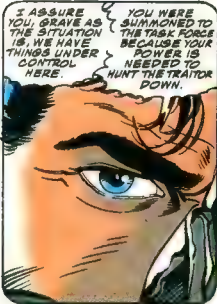
EASY, YOUNGSTER! GARDNER'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS TAKEN IN.



LOOK, THE THINGS YOU'VE SHOWN US ARE HORRIBLE ENOUGH!

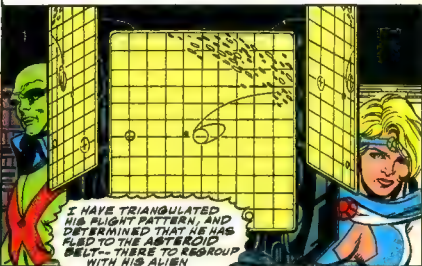
WHY IN HEAVEN'S NAME DID YOU HAVE THE LEAGUE DIVERT US HERE TO THE EAST COAST? I GREEN LANTERN AND I LIVE IN CALIFORNIA!

YES, WE COULD BR OUT THERE NOW-- HELPING YOU!



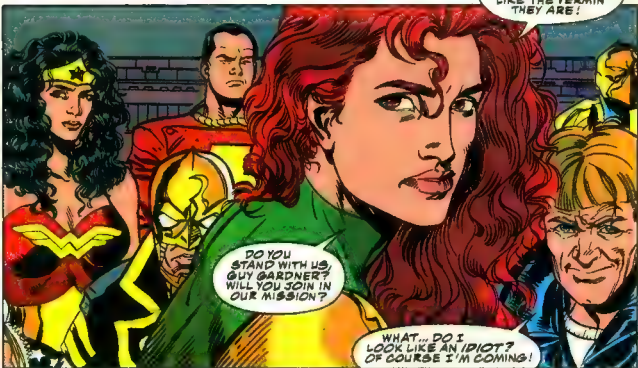
I ASSURE YOU, GRAVE AS THE SITUATION IS, WE HAVE THINGS UNDER CONTROL HERE.

YOU WERE SUMMONED TO THE TASK FORCE BECAUSE YOUR POWER IS NEEDED TO HUNT THE TRAITOR DOWN.



I HAVE TRIANGULATED HIS FLIGHT PATTERN, AND DETERMINED THAT HE HAS FLED TO THE ASTEROID BELT-- THERE TO REGROUP WITH HIS ALIEN PARTNERS.

THEN WE MUST TRACK THEM DOWN AND DESTROY THEM LIKE THE VERMIN THEY ARE!



DO YOU STAND WITH US GUY GARDNER? WILL YOU JOIN IN OUR MISSION?

WHAT... DO I LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT? OF COURSE I'M COMING!



JOINING YOUR LITTLE BUG HUNT IS THE ONLY WAY TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MESS! I'M STILL BETTING MY MAN'S BEEN SET UP BY THESE ALIEN CREEPS--!

AND WHAT IF HE HASN'T BEEN, GUY? WHAT IF HE'S GUILTY?

THEN HE'S MINE, MARVEL! I'LL MAKE HIM WISH HE WAS NEVER BORN!

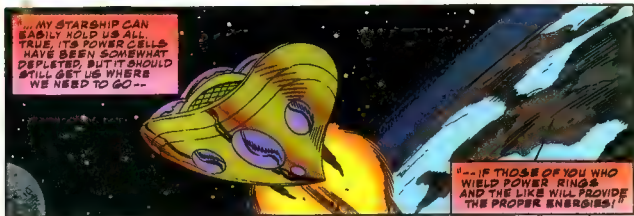
WE'LL SAID!



"WE'LL SAID"?! MAXIMA IS AS HOT-HEADED AS GARDNER!

LET'S NOT GO OFF HALF-COCKED! FIRST, WE'LL NEED A SHIP. THERE'S STILL A LOT WE DON'T KNOW--!

WE KNOW ENOUGH, CAPTAIN! WE HAVE SUPERMAN'S COURSE CALCULATIONS, AND WE HAVE TRANSPORT AVAILABLE...



"... MY STARSHIP CAN EASILY HOLD US ALL. TRUE, ITS POWER CELLS HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT DEPLETED, BUT IT SHOULD STILL GET US WHERE WE NEED TO GO--

"-- IF THOSE OF YOU WHO WIELD POWER RINGS AND THE LIKE WILL PROVIDE THE PROPER ENERGIES!



GOING INTO BATTLE IS NEVER EASY. HAVING YOUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD ALONG MAKES IT HELL.

KRIPES, THAT'S REALLY THE MOON OUT THERE!

DAD HASN'T SAID MUCH, BUT I CAN TELL THAT HE'S WORRIED.

HE CAN'T BE RESPONSIBLE! BUT IF HE IS... I'LL KICK HIS BUTT TILL HIS NOSE BLEEDS, AN' THEN--!

SO AM I, DAD. SO AM I.

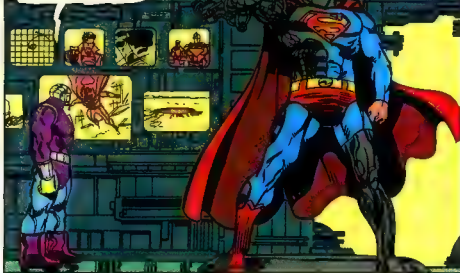
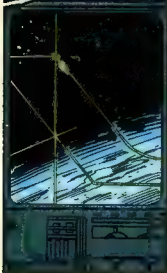
ORBITAL SCANNERS
INDICATE THAT THE
JUSTICE LEAGUE SHIP
HAS ACHIEVED
ESCAPE VELOCITY.

YOU WERE
ABSOLUTELY
RIGHT--

--THEY WERE EASILY
DECEIVED. PERHAPS
IT WAS EVEN BECAUSE
OF THEIR POWERS THAT
THEY BELIEVED.

SOME OF THEM SO
DESPERATELY WANTED
TO USE THOSE POWERS
TO DO SOMETHING.

PERHAPS, AT
ANY RATE, THAT'S
ENOUGH DIS-
INFORMATION
FOR ONE
SESSION.



YOU DO THIS
WELL. HAD I
NOT KNOWN THE
TRUTH, THESE
FALSE VIDEO
FEEDS OF YOURS
MIGHT HAVE
FOOLED EVEN
ME.

BELIEVE
IT, BROW!
THE
CYBORG-
MAN IS
ONE BAD
STUD!

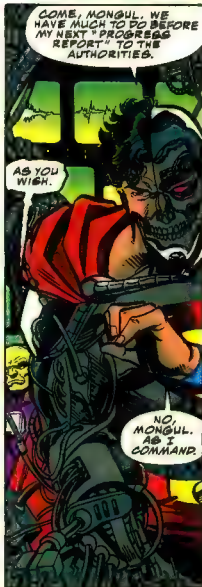


YES.
MOST
TRUE-TO-
LIFE.

COME, MONGUL. WE
HAVE MUCH TO DO BEFORE
MY NEXT "PROGRESS
REPORT" TO THE
AUTHORITIES.

AS YOU
WISH.

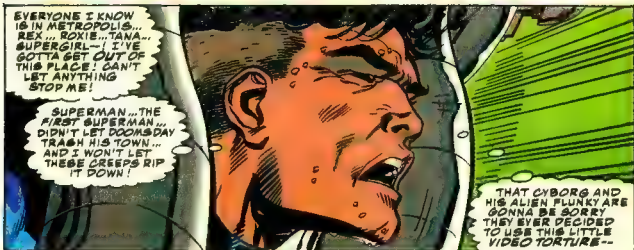
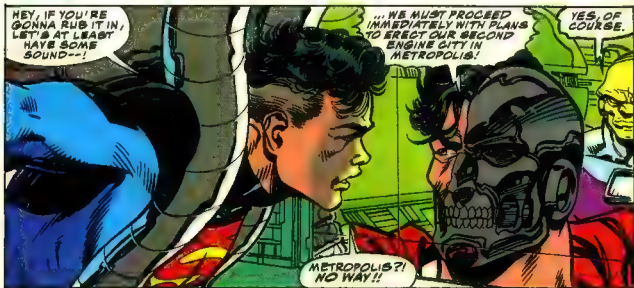
NO,
MONGUL.
AS
COMMAND.



"AS YOU COMMAND--!"
YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY
ONE WHO CAN CONTROL
TRANSMISSIONS, MY
DEAR "LEADER!"

I MAY LACK YOUR
ABILITY TO GENERATE
SUCH CONVINCING
FALSE IMAGES--





"... 'CAUSE IT'LL BE A COLD DAY IN HELL BEFORE I GIVE UP NOW!"

ANTARCTICA

HOW FAR'S THE MASTER?

NOT WELL. HIS PHYSICAL CONDITION HAS BEEN STABILIZED-- BUT HE HAS DRIFTED INTO DELIRIUM.

I... AM... SUPERMAN.

I... AM... THE LAST SON... OF KRYPTON.

THE NUTRIENT BATH IS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR THE REGENERATION MATRIX.

AS LONG AS THIS MENTAL CONFUSION CONTINUES, THERE IS DANGER THAT HIS MIND WILL DISCORPORATE.

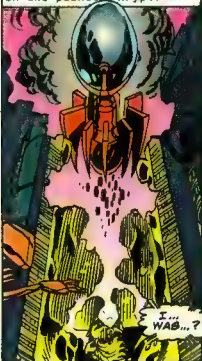
I... AM SUPERMAN.

WHERE... WHERE IS THE POWER?

IF HE IS TO BE SAVED, WE MUST CURE HIS DELIRIUM.

THERE WILL BE RISKS, BUT WE CAN FORGE A LINK TO HIS INNERMOST PSYCHE...

Downloading...you were created 200,000 years ago on the planet Krypton.



I... WAS...?

You began as an integrated analysis and weapons system. Your creator called you the ERADICATOR.

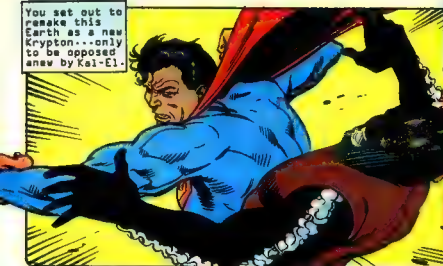
In time, you developed sentience...and came into the possession of Krypton's last living survivor, KAL-EL the SUPERMAN. But he resisted your efforts to preserve the Kryptonian way.



KAL-EL... RESISTED ME? BUT...

He sought to destroy you, but you became one with the power of Earth's sun, and were re-formed as a humanoid.

You set out to remake this Earth as a new Krypton...only to be opposed anew by Kal-El.



Again and again, you did battle, until, ultimately, he defeated you. Your energies and memory were dispersed within the walls of this Fortress which you had created.

"THE BATTLE... I REMEMBER. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MY END, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE FAILSAFES PROGRAMMED INTO THE FORTRESS'S ROBOTIC SERVITORS."

Correct. They collected and contained your energies, recreating you in mind, though not in body.



"I REMEMBER... FEELING DISMEMBERED. THERE WERE... GAPS IN MY MEMORY..."

You accessed Fortress monitors and learned of Kal-El's battle to the death with the monster Doomsday.

"YES. I... I SAW... IN THAT DEATH... A CHANCE FOR NEW LIFE."



You flew to Metropolis to take over his body.

"Y-YES... BUT THERE WAS... RESISTANCE. AS I SOUGHT... TO POSSESS THE BODY, KAL-EL'S OWN ESSENCE ASSERTED ITSELF. MY ENERGIES JOINED WITH THOSE STORED IN THE BODY BUT BRIEFLY..."

"I WAS... BARELY ABLE TO CREATE A MATTER/ENERGY FLUX. I... DREW MASS FROM WITHIN THE TOMB... CREATING A NEW BODY FOR MYSELF."

"KAL-EL'S PERFECT KRYPTONIAN FORM WAS MY MODEL."

"BUT MY NEW BODY WAS NOT PERFECT. MY EYES WERE LIGHT SENSITIVE... I COULD NO LONGER DIRECTLY CHANNEL THE POWER OF THE SUN."



Kal-El's body, however, could. You brought it back to the Fortress and had it placed within a matrix.



"I DID. YES..."

"...MY REBIRTH HAD CHANGED ME IN MANY WAYS. I FELT STRANGE URGES...PASSIONS. PERHAPS IT WAS BECAUSE MY NEW BODY WAS MADE IN HIS IMAGE."

You had assumed his form and drawn upon his power. You began to see yourself in his role.



You preserved his body to absorb and convert solar energy into a form which you could then tap.



You became irrational. Fortress servitors reinforced your delusions...

...They followed their programming to obey the commands of Kryptonian intelligences.



"...THE POWER OF SUPERMAN WAS MINE. I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD LEAVE ME."

"WITHOUT IT, I AM NOTHING...NOTHING BUT AN ARTIFACT OF A DEAD WORLD."



PROGNOSIS?

UNCERTAIN. BACK-FEED LOOP SUGGESTS THAT THE ERADICATOR HAS ENDED HIS SELF-DENIAL.

THERE IS A CHANCE HE CAN BE MOTIVATED TO RECOVER

MOTIVATION IS NOT ENOUGH--NOR IS THE NUTRIENT BATH SUFFICIENT TO CORRECT HIS BODILY INJURIES. HE MUST BE RE-ENERGIZED.



BUT HOW? MASTER KAL-EL WAS BY FAR HIS BEST CONDUIT FOR ENERGY--

"--AND HE IS BEYOND OUR POWER TO CONTACT OR RECALL."

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN,
JUST OFF THE COAST OF THE
FALKLAND ISLANDS...

I can't believe
these readings.

I knew that this walk-
ing tank could truck,
but the speed it's main-
taining is nothing short
of phenomenal--
especially at such a
depth!

At this rate, I ought
to arrive in a matter
of hours. It can't be
soon enough, as far
as I'm concerned

KROOM

What was that?
Did the War-
Suit's defense
systems kick
in again?

I wish I could
tell what's
going on out
there...



...but I'm basically riding inside this thing, DEAF, DUMB AND BLIND!

I suppose I shouldn't complain. After the pounding the Eradicator once gave this War-Suit, * it's astounding that the Fortress Robots were able to get any of its systems back on line.

* IN THE CLASSIC ACTION #667.



This is Frustrating... I have locomotion, life-support, and defense... but NO communications!

At least the navigation system constantly updates my latitude and longitude... I know that I'm still on course.



I just wish that I had a functioning radio, so I could tell people that I'm coming-- AND find out what's going on!

From the last news I heard in the Fortress, there were at least FOUR Superman pre-renders on the loose in Metropolis-- and two of them were duking it out over the rights to the name! *

God knows what ELSE has happened since I've set out! One thing's for sure, putting an end to all this nonsense is most definitely a job--

* JUST LAST ISSUE.



--For the REAL Superman!

NEXT:

IN MAN OF STEEL #25:

"THE RETURN!"

IN SUPERMAN #81:

"RESURRECTIONS!"

IN ADVENTURES #504:

"ASSAULT ON ENGINE CITY!"

AND DON'T YOU DARE MISS ACTION COMICS #691:

"SECRET WEAPON!"

REACTION

DC COMICS

1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019

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Dear SUPERMAN Creative Team:

Let me start by saying that I've never been a big SUPERMAN fan. Sure, I saw the movies and collected the obligatory "important" issues (e.g., the engagement of Clark and Lois). My interest in comics came about shortly after the "Death in the Family" saga in the BATMAN title. A friend let me read a copy and I was hooked. I hadn't realized just how good the art and writing were in the comics of today. Batman has always held my interest. He had a sense of realism to him. He was just an exceptional man who fought crime. He could, conceivably, die.

When I heard about DC's plan to kill off Superman, I didn't believe it at first. When it was confirmed, I was intrigued. Finally, Superman faces mortality. It seemed more than just an "obligatory must-read," and it certainly was. Each installment of "Doomsday" built in suspense as the number of panels decreased, emphasizing the solemn importance of the Man of Steel's date with destiny.

Doomsday, himself, was a fitting executioner. He was perhaps a pure specimen of rage and destructive force, the perfect antithesis to Superman's pure quest for truth and justice. Could there be a lesson derived from their meeting and the subsequent results? Must pure evil and pure good necessarily negate each other? I wonder.

"Funeral for a Friend" has been, thus far, very well written. It is important now to see what will become of those who loved and depended on Superman. I especially enjoy the emphasis on "exploitation of the death" and "excessive use of force" issues. And of course, just what's going on over at Cadmus? We aren't working out some sort of fancy way of bringing back the dead Kryptonian, are we? I hope so. Giving Superman mortality has gained at least this fan. Looking forward to ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #500 and beyond...

Tim Gonyo
Moorea, NY

Dear Editor:

Well, as *Saturday Night Live* used to say about Francisco Franco, Superman is still dead! I like the "Supergirl in Action" logo, and these recent covers have been outstanding!

Nice to see the Guardian back in action! And I loved that bit with the laser disc recording of the chase and capture! Other heroes should take note! But just why *were* they stealing that delivery van??

Why is Lex so paranoid? As with most devious people, he judges others by his standards! He's never been able to accept that, with all of his power, Superman is really as altruistic as he appears to be. By the same token, Luthor *did* fake his own death, so I can see him thinking that Supes might have done the same!

So Cadmus has Suicide Slum honeycombed with secret entrances to Project Cadmus, eh? That should really help the Guardian's crime-fighting in that area, as he can literally pop up anywhere at a moment's notice! A regular Phantom of Suicide Slum, as it were.

Page 10: Boy, Lex has an answer for everything! Time capsule, indeed! I'm glad the Guardian found out about Westfield stealing Superman's body! But so what if Westfield has authorization to "collect and study alien decedents." If memory serves, Superman was born in this country! He's no more an alien than I am! Maybe someone should bring that to Westfield's attention, before he gets himself in even more trouble.

This seems to be the issue for discoveries, as Lex learns that Cadmus was behind Superman's body's disappearance. And I'm waiting for Supergirl to discover Luthor's true colors! That's going to be a fun read. I also concur with Turpin's sentiments on page 19, panel 3.

But what made the issue for me was that goodbye scene at the airport between Lois and Lana. Lana, whose unrequited love for Clark predates Lois's involvement with him, reaching out to commiserate with his fiancée. Gotta love her! What a woman! I still can't believe Clark chose Lois

over her! I wouldn't have made that mistake! Now, if only I could figure out a way to get Pete Ross out of the picture...

Bob Kowalski
Detroit, MI

Dear Everybody:

Thank you!
Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Since Byrne's MAN OF STEEL miniseries, Lana Lang has been my absolute favorite character in the SUPERMAN line. I've felt she's been sadly underused in recent years.

That's why I can't thank you enough for the brief moment between her and Lois on the last page of ACTION #686. Thank you, Roger Stern, for showing us Lana's warmth and compassion again; thank you, Jackson Guice and Denis Rodier and Glenn Whitmore, for illustrating it so beautifully. Thank you for effectively acknowledging the unique relationship these two women must have for the first time, I think, since ACTION COMICS #597.

I hope you continue to develop this in the future. I'd love to see Lois take advantage of Lana's offer.

Finally, thank you all for the consistently outstanding job that everyone has been doing on all of the SUPERMAN titles. Keep up the good work.

Ben McClure
no address given

Dear Mike and Jennifer:

I've come back to the SUPERMAN titles after many years; I've been with you now since "War of the Gods." I had to backtrack and find Byrne and Giordano's MAN OF STEEL trade paperback so I could understand Superman's new persona — he's changed a lot since I last read him. You gently parody yourself within your pages, with peripheral characters sometimes referring pejoratively to his more pacific qualities, the inference being that he is still the bland, omnipotent cipher he once became. Not any more. I've

enjoyed many of the storylines, particularly the very cogent "Crisis at Hand." I think any mass medium has a responsibility to its public, and you're obviously strongly aware of that. I'm also pleased with the way you've logically and realistically presented the progression of Clark and Lois's romance, dealing with their mutual concerns of priorities, children and family. You've managed to get me enough involved in their lives to vacillate between fascination with the anguish Superman's death has caused, and anger that you could devastate Lois and the elder Kents like this.

Though the death of a hero has been a pretty common scenario recently, increasing exponentially since Princess Diana's in WOTG, you're approaching it differently here, focusing not so much on the trauma itself, but on the human ramifications it's caused. I was afraid at first that this would be another grossly sensationalistic bid to improve flagging finances—maybe that's a factor, but you've given us a high-quality product. With four SUPERMAN titles, the crossovers with the JLA, references made to the death in other titles and the chronology of the story arc, you're allowing yourselves enough time to fully develop and portray the emotional void the loss of Superman would logically have created. Now you walk a fine line between doing justice to your story and saturating your audience with angst.

I'm pleased that you've allowed Princess Diana to assume a pivotal role in the efforts of the other heroes to continue the Legacy of Superman's compassion for others in SUPERMAN #76 as they took on the mantle of his herculean Christmas Eve task of helping others. Compassion is one of their common characteristics; their "great friendship" has occurred primarily off-panel—her presence and leadership here substantiate that relationship.

It's hard watching Lois, Lana and Clark's parents struggle with their grief, made all the more poignant because it must remain private. I lost my father three years ago; your portrayal of the pain is touchingly accurate.

I know Superman will return; I can't imagine a world permanently without him. I only hope he'll still be somebody we recognize—and who recognizes us.

Nancy Champion
Manassas, VA

Dear Jennifer:

Hmmm. So Cadmus is going to try to clone Superman, eh?

Wouldn't doing so be extremely dangerous? If something were to go wrong, a hideous mutation might result, à la Domsday. In fact, with just such an accident and a time machine inside his containment unit to send him back in time, could we be seeing the origin of Domsday? Wouldn't that be ironic? Superman murdered at the hands of his own clone! That certainly would explain how Domsday became so powerful and invulnerable, and where he came from. If nothing else, it's an interesting "what if" idea.

On the flip side, however, if this attempt is successful and a clone of Superman is given life, having Dubbilee infuse him with the mental impressions of Superman won't give us back the Clark we all know and love. Such a Clark would have no idea of Superman's relationship with Lois, among other things. Such a cheap way of avoiding their wedding would be unforgivable, and certainly below the standards of this line of titles.

In fact, when Clark does return, I hope he and Lois realize how close they came to not ever being married. Thus they should quickly set a date for the wedding and plan to be married by, at least, ACTION #700, or better yet, SUPERMAN #100. Having Supes propose in SUPERMAN #50, die in #75 and marry in #100 would be the perfect way to structure the first hundred issues of SUPERMAN.

Whatever the circumstances, this can't be the final ACTION COMICS.

James Evans
Madison, WI

Dear Mike:

I am one of those who have been around since the early 60's. I rarely have a chance to write in, but I'm still here. Kara was like a big sister to me when I was little. My daughter is named after her. I found it difficult to forgive the powers-that-be for her death, but I'm still here! Now I know why. The writing, character development and art have so vastly improved over the years. Supergirl in ACTION #686 was a perfect example of this—especially the last page. I remember the old days when Lois and Lana were at each other's throats and now, well, beautiful. We see them comforting each other. I just finished reading it on my lunch hour and people are wondering why I have tears in my eyes. I'm glad I stuck it out. This was well worth it. Thank you so much.

Linda and Kara Podell
West Hollywood, CA

If you think the stories are worth sticking around for already, what are you going to think when you and Kara receive your Beldy and your Platinum SUPERMAN #75? Also, if you're ever at a comics convention that MAN OF STEEL artist Jon Bogdanove is attending, introduce Kara to his son, Kal-El!

—Jennifer Frank
What's In A Name?

NEXT ISSUE: Superboy learned a lot while imprisoned in Engine City...but the Man of Steel is too busy protecting Metropolis from the Kryptonian Battle Suit to listen! The fate of Metropolis—and the world—lies in the balance in MAN OF STEEL #25, written by Louise Simonson, pencilled by Jon Bogdanove and inked by Dennis Janke.

IN TWO WEEKS: Mongul's insidious plans are well under way and there's little time left for the Earth to defend itself; will even three Supermen be enough to stop the bloodthirsty alien Warlord? SUPERMAN #81 is written and drawn by Dan Jurgens and finished by Brett Breeding.

IN THREE WEEKS: The Kryptonite in Engine City could kill a Superman—maybe three—when they penetrate the heart of the complex in a desperate effort to thwart Mongul's deadly plan. ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #504 is written by Karl Kesel, pencilled by Tom Grummett and inked by Doug Hazlewood.

IN ONE MONTH: The Last Son of Krypton prepares to join the fight at Engine City, but it's a race against time as Mongul starts up the lethal engine at the center of the city. ACTION COMICS #691 is written by Roger Stern, laid out by Jackson Guice and finished by Denis Rodier.

The Last Son of Krypton is more than a match for the armed forces below him on this month's cover as visualized by Kerry Gammill, fleshed out by Jackson Guice and colored by Glenn Whitmore.





SOOPAH-BEAST, SOOPAH-BEAST!
HE'S SOOPAH-BEASTLY!